

## **AASCB National Credential Registry**

### **Portability Policies and Procedures**

The American Association of State Counseling Boards (AASCB) is the alliance of governmental agencies responsible for the licensure and certification of counselors throughout the United States. AASCB collects, interprets, and disseminates information on legal and regulatory matters, and works to further cooperation among individuals and associations involved in providing counseling services to the public. Furthermore, AASCB publishes materials for training programs and member boards.

The AASCB National Credential Registry is a service whereby licensed counselors may deposit with AASCB for a fee, information about their educational preparation, supervised experience, examination performance, continuing education, and work history. Individuals who meet the Registry standard will receive the services of the Credential Registry. Those individuals who do not qualify for the Registry standard may deposit licensure-related information with AASCB and open a credential file record within the AASCB National Credential Registry. This will provide licensed counselors the opportunity to store information that will/may lead to Registrant Credentialing, and will also allow this information to be centrally maintained, whereby the individual may request the records from one location rather than contacting each relevant agency wherever needed. Information on such a record will be stored and maintained by AASCB and forwarded to an AASCB member board upon the request of the individual.

#### **1. Introduction**

The AASCB National Credential Registry is established to facilitate professional mobility of licensed counselors. The registry will provide recognition by AASCB member boards of professional counseling licenses issued by other AASCB member boards. The AASCB Registry ensures professional mobility through two methods: First, issuance of an AASCB designation of Registrant to licensed counselors meeting eligibility criteria established by AASCB; and Second, establishment of a repository of licensure-related information for professional counselors called the “AASCB National Credential Registry”.

AASCB will document that individuals registered have met specific requirements relative to education background, longevity of licensure, supervisory experience, performance on an approved examination, evidence of continuing education, and freedom from disciplinary actions. Specific standards appear further in this document. Additionally, the Registry requires that the holder be licensed by an AASCB member jurisdiction, and has never had disciplinary action taken against his/her license.

- A.1 Issuance of the AASCB designation of Registrant is based upon standards established by the AASCB Credentialing Committee and endorsed by the AASCB Executive Committee. The Registry is a means by which an individual can easily demonstrate to a licensing board that he/she has met AASCB recommended standards for licensure. This program is administered by and is under the authority of the American Association of State Counseling Boards. This qualification does not constitute nor guarantee licensure. It does not qualify its holder to practice in any jurisdiction prior to being licensed by that jurisdiction. It is possible that not all counselors who are licensed or certified by individual AASCB member boards will qualify for the Registry.
- A.2. In addition to offering the Registry to individual counselors meeting eligibility criteria, AASCB shall encourage its member boards to accept the Registrant as evidence that an applicant for licensure has met the educational requirements, supervised experience, and examination required for licensure.
- A.3. AASCB member boards may require Registrants to meet additional state requirements and pay the applicable fees required of all licensees within that jurisdiction. AASCB cannot guarantee that member boards will accept the Registrant with no further requirements.

#### **2. Definitions/Acronyms**

AASCB= American Association of State Counseling Boards  
CACREP= Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs  
CCMHC= Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselor  
Clinical Experience= Post License Counseling Experience gained in a mental health center or private practice setting.  
CRCC= Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification  
CRC Exam= Certified Rehabilitation Counselor Exam  
Licensed Counselor= one holding a state required counseling credential to practice independently  
NCMHCE= National Clinical Mental Health Counselor Exam  
NBCC= National Board for Certified Counselors  
NCC= National Certified Counselor  
NCE= National Counselor Exam  
Registrant= Individual Professional Counselor registered for portability with AASCB

3. **Purpose of the AASCB National Credential Registry Program**

- A. To facilitate mobility between participating states for the individual licensed counselor in the United States.
- B. To reduce the demands placed on AASCB member boards to obtain evidence of fulfillment of the regulations of their boards.
- C. To promote greater uniformity in credentialing standards across jurisdictions.
- D. To establish a credential Registry for individual counselors to archive records relative to:
  - Educational preparation and professional training
  - Supervised experience
  - Test scores
  - Work history
- E. To reduce disputes, duplication of materials, and waiting time when a licensee, who has unblemished records of professional service and appropriate credentials, desires licensure in another jurisdiction.

4. **Structure of the AASCB National Credential Registry Program**

- A. AASCB National Credential Registry Program operates as a division of AASCB and under the authority of AASCB.
- B. Even though it operates under the authority AASCB, the program is an independent decision-making entity when dealing with qualifications.
- C. All administrative support contributed to the designation program (including staff) is provided by AASCB or designee.
- D. Funding for the AASCB National Credential Registry Program will be obtained from the fees collected for initial designation, credential bank services, and renewal fees. Start up costs will be provided by AASCB and repaid by the Registry.

5. **Scope of the AASCB National Credential Registry Program**

- I. The National Credential Registry is available to individual counselors who:
  - A. Are currently licensed by at least one AASCB member board in the United States
  - B. Have no history of any disciplinary action (e.g., revocation, suspension, restriction) in any jurisdiction.
  - C. Meet AASCB standards for Registry pertaining to education, supervised experience, and examinations.
- II. The Credential Registry is available to:
  - A. Individuals who qualify for the National Credential Registry;
  - B. Individuals who do not qualify for the National Credential Registry but who are working towards qualification for the National Credential Registry (e.g., Master's level interns)
  - C. Individuals who may never qualify for the National Credential Registry but who wish to deposit important licensure-related records of education, supervised experience, examination performance, or other pertinent information.

6. **National Credential Registry Committee (NCRC)**

The National Credential Registry committee shall be comprised of five members, which shall include:

- A. Four licensed counselors who are, at the time of original appointment, currently full members of an AASCB member board.
- B. One member who is not and has never been licensed in a mental health related profession and who is in no way connected with the practice of any mental health profession.
- C. The AASCB president/designee shall be an ex-officio member of the NCRC, maintaining all rights associated with being a member.

Committee members shall be appointed by the AASCB Executive Committee and serve on a voluntary basis.

**Terms:**

- 1. Each member shall be appointed for a three-year term. However, original members shall be appointed for staggered terms to ensure continuity.
- 2. Members of the committee cannot serve more than two consecutive three-year terms.
- 3. Members who leave their respective Licensure boards may serve until the end of their appointment.

**Committee Meetings:**

- 1. The committee shall meet at least annually and more often if necessary.
- 2. Committee meetings shall be held at an appropriate time and place as determined by the NCR Committee. One meeting shall be at the AASCB annual conference.
- 3. Expenses incurred by the committee members will be reimbursed by the AASCB National Credential Registry budget.

**7. Eligibility Requirements for the Registrant**

A. All Registrants must meet the following minimum criteria:

1. Have completed 5 years of Post License Experience in counseling.
2. Possess a current active license or certification to practice counseling at the independent level in an AASCB member jurisdiction; and be a licensee in good standing with the respective board.
3. Report ALL history of disciplinary action.

B. In addition to the criteria listed above, applicants for the National Credential Registry must demonstrate qualification to one of the two credentials groups:

I:

**A. Education:**

48 Semester Hours including a Master's degree in counseling or related field obtained from an institution of higher education that is regionally accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Course content areas must include the following subject areas: Professional Identity; Social and Cultural Diversity; Human Growth and Development; Career Development; Helping Relationships; Group Work; Assessment; Research and Program Evaluation; and Psychopathology. (See Appendix for course/subject definition)

**B. Supervision:**

1. Supervisor's must have at least a Master's degree in a counseling related field.
2. Supervisees must have a minimum of two years Post Master's counseling experience with a minimum of 3,000 clock hours.
3. Of the 3,000 clock hours, at least 1,900 hours must be direct client contact.
4. A minimum of 100 hours of clinical supervision - Post Master's. 50 of the hours may be in group supervision.

**C. Post License Experience**

5 years of Post License experience at the independent level in a counseling setting.

**EQUIVALENCIES: ADDITIONAL years of counseling experience may replace educational or supervision requirements (see Appendix)**

II:

**A. Education:**

60 Semester Hours including a Master's degree in counseling or related field obtained from an institution of higher education that is regionally accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Course content areas must include the following subject areas: Professional Identity; Social and Cultural Diversity; Human Growth and Development; Career Development; Helping Relationships; Group Work; Assessment; Research and Program Evaluation; and Psychopathology. Additional coursework will be in counseling modalities and/or treatment within special populations. (See Appendix for course definition)

**B. Supervision:**

1. Supervisors must have at least a Master's degree in a counseling related field.
2. Supervisees must have a minimum of two years Post Master's counseling experience with a minimum of 4,000 clock hours.
2. Of the 4,000 clock hours, at least 2,500 hours must be direct client contact.
3. A minimum of 100 hours of clinical supervision - Post Master's. 50 of the hours may be in group supervision.

**C. Post License Experience**

5 years of Post License Clinical Counseling Experience at the independent level.

**EQUIVALENCIES: ADDITIONAL years of counseling experience may replace educational or supervision requirements (see Appendix)**

**Foreign Degrees:**

Registrants who have obtained a degree from a non-U.S. or foreign based institution, and meet all other requirements, will be considered for status as a registrant if they currently hold an active license from an AASCB member board.

**C. Required Examination:**

The applicant must have successfully passed a licensure examination recognized by the AASCB member board. The NCE, NCHMCE, State Exams, or Certified Rehabilitation Counselor Exams are examples of appropriate tests.

**D. Modification of Eligibility Criteria:**

Qualifying criteria for the National Credential Registry may change as a result of action by the National Credential Registry committee and approved by the AASCB. New criteria will become effective on the date approved by the AASCB Executive committee and will apply to both applications in process and newly filed applications, but will not affect registrants already deemed qualified who have an active status with the registry.

**E. Use of Equivalencies by State Boards:**

Certain qualifying criteria may be met in an equivalent manner, when approved by individual state Licensing Boards. State Boards may deem qualified work experience as equivalent to certain of their state licensing requirements for the purpose of facilitating portability of qualified Licensed Counselors. For specific equivalency options, see Appendix.

**8. Verification of National Credential Registry Qualification:**

**A. For National Credential Registry applicants, AASCB will verify:**

1. Licensure status in an AASCB member jurisdiction. This information must be sent directly by the AASCB member board.
2. Possession of a graduate degree in counseling or related field from an accredited institution. This will be in the form of an official transcript received directly from the member board or the respective institution.
3. The absence of any disciplinary actions (e.g., revocation, suspension, restriction) in any jurisdiction.
4. Passing scores on an acceptable examination as verified by AASCB member boards.

**9. National Credential Registry Application Review Process:**

- A. An individual interested in applying for the National Credential Registry must make application by completing forms obtained from the National Credential Registry or designee, including an application checklist.
- B. A file will not be considered complete until all documentation required has been submitted.
- C. A review of an application will be made by the National Credential Registry or designee.
- D. If the application is incomplete, the applicant will be notified in writing of the deficiencies and no further action will be taken until the file is complete.
- E. Once the application is determined to be complete, evaluation of the application shall be conducted by the National Credential Registry Committee regarding the applicant's eligibility as a Registrant.
- F. The applicant will be notified in writing of the decision to approve or deny the qualification. An individual whose application is denied will be advised of the procedures needed to appeal the committee's decision..

**10. Appeals for Denial of Designation:**

- A. Appeals shall be considered by the Designation Appeals Committee, which is made up of three members appointed by the AASCB Executive Committee. No member of the Appeals Committee shall serve concurrently on the Executive Committee or the Credentials Registry. Two committee members shall be licensed counselors and the third a public member.
- B. Applicants who are denied the designation may file an appeal by submitting a letter to the Designation Appeals Committee. The appeal must be received within 90 days of the date of the letter of notice regarding denial of the designation.
- C. An appeal must be based on the contention that the National Credential Registry Committee erred in its decision based on information submitted in the application and supporting documentation as of the applicant's last review.
- D. The decision of the Designation Appeals Committee will be final.

**11. National Credential Registry Renewal on Biennial Basis**

- A. The National Credential Registry designation, Registrant, is valid for two years from the date upon which the designation notification is sent to the applicant.
- B. The National Credential Registry must be renewed biennially by submission of the established fee; documentation of a current active license in an AASCB licensed jurisdiction and absence of disciplinary action.

- C. Prior to the renewal date, AASCB will send each National Credential Registry holder a statement for the renewal fee and renewal application. Fees will be due on or before the indicated date. Failure to renew in a timely manner will cause the National Credential Registry holder to be placed on an inactive status. In order to reactivate, the former Registrant must pay all delinquent renewal fees and a reactivation fee.

**12. Fees for National Credential Registry Application Renewal, Reactivation and Re-application for Services:**

- A. The non-refundable Registry application fee for initial qualification is \$ \_\_\_\_\_.  
B. The renewal fee is \$ \_\_\_\_\_.  
C. A late fee of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ must be paid in addition to any past due renewal fees, for each missed renewal cycle. Any renewal received 60 days after the renewal date will be charged a Credential Registry reactivation fee of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.  
D. Registrants may have their records forwarded to one recipient free of charge in any annual renewal period. A second or subsequent request for transmission of a credential record within an annual renewal period will be provided for a fee of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.  
E. A fee of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ will be charged for each returned check.

**13. Revocation or Suspension of Registrant:**

- A. A Registrant shall be revoked or suspended upon reasonable proof of the following:
1. Any disciplinary sanction other than a reprimand imposed upon a designated license holder by an AASCB member board.
  2. Proof of fraud in application.
  3. Failure to reactivate a member designation within a two-year time limit.
  4. Failure to comply with all applicable statutory, regulatory, and ethical requirements regarding National Credential Registry status.
  5. Expulsion from a professional mental health association.
  6. Sanction issued by an ethics committee or any other entity within the mental health profession.
  7. Conviction of a serious crime, despite the pendency of any appeal or legal proceedings. A serious crime shall include any felony, any lesser crime, an element in which under applicable laws is fraud, bribery, extortion, theft or attempt or conspiracy to commit another serious crime; or any other criminal act involving moral turpitude.
  8. Voluntary resignation from the organization when such resignation is made to avoid sanctions.
- B. Appeals, Revocation or Refusal to Renew:
- Individuals whose designation is revoked or suspended at renewal time may file an appeal with the designation Appeals Committee on the appropriate form. The committee must receive the appeal within 90 days of the date of the Designation Committee's letter regarding revocation or renewal.

**14. Responsibilities of the Registrant Qualifications Designees:**

- A. National Credential Registry status is derived from the practitioner's basic qualifications for licensure and should not be represented as an additional qualification or a superior service level.  
B. Designation holders are expected to comply with all applicable statutory, regulatory, and ethical requirements representing their National Credential Registry status. The Registrant designation shall not be represented in any way as a title or credential confusing to employers, consumers, regulators, or other interested parties.

**15. Responsibilities to Applicants:**

The National Credential Registry program shall not discriminate among applicants based on age, gender, race, religion, national origin, disability, or political affiliation. .

**16. Responsibilities of the Designation Committee:**

- A. The committee shall instruct participants of the National Credential Registry on the appropriate representation of the National Credential Registry and shall require the candidates to appropriately represent the designation of National Credential Registry.  
B. The committee shall implement a formal policy for periodic review of the eligibility criteria and application procedures for the National Credential Registry to insure that they are clear and equitable and reflect appropriate documentation of eligibility for licensure in an AASCB member jurisdiction.

**17. Responsibilities and Roles of Licensure Boards:**

Licensure boards may adopt the National Credential Registry program to support and facilitate their credentials review process. In doing so, they accept an active, professional qualification in counseling as evidence that credential requirements are met.

18. **Reports from National Credentials Registry Committees:**

- A. The committee shall periodically (minimum once yearly) disseminate information regarding the National Credential Registry to the AASCB Executive Committee, member boards, and other appropriate organizations.
- B. Information to be disseminated shall include, but not be limited to: qualification purposes and goals; qualification requirements; recognition of jurisdiction; qualification program policies and procedures; benefits of the designation, member boards, and number of licensees participating in the National Credential Registry, and any changes occurring to the Credential Registry in the period between notification.

19. **Publications Regarding Qualification Renewal:**

The AASCB Executive Committee may grant permission to analyze the qualification data only upon written application and approval by the National Credential Registry.

20. **Directory of Qualification Holders:**

A web-based directory listing the States who accept the National Credential Registry, will be available and updated regularly. Also, individual States' exceptions will be listed.

## APPENDIX

### EQUIVALENCIES:

**The use of equivalencies to make up for differences between a registrants credentials and individual state licensing requirements is at the sole discretion of each individual state licensing board. State Boards will determine how and under what circumstances they are willing to accept equivalencies and provide that information to the NCR. That information will be made available on the NCR website.**

#### ADDITIONAL years of POST LICENSE COUNSELING EXPERIENCE

Plus

100 hours of ADDITIONAL INDIVIDUAL SUPERVISION

Plus

100 hours of CONTINUING EDUCATION recognized by the State Licensing board or NBCC

### MAY BE SUBSTITUTED FOR:

12 semester hours of EDUCATION

AND/OR

1,000 hours of Post Graduate EXPERIENCE

AND/OR

Additional TESTING requirements

### A. CACREP Definition of CORE COURSES:

**1.PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY** - studies that provide an understanding of all of the following aspects of professional functioning:

a. History and philosophy of the counseling profession, including significant factors and events; b. professional roles, functions, and relationships with other human service providers; c. technological competence and computer literacy; d. professional organizations, primarily ACA, its divisions, branches, and affiliates, including membership benefits, activities, services to members, and current emphases; e. professional credentialing, including certification, licensure, and accreditation practices and standards, and the effects of public policy on these issues; f. public and private policy processes, including the role of the professional counselor in advocating on behalf of the profession; g. advocacy processes needed to address institutional and social barriers that impede access, equity, and success for clients; and h. ethical standards of ACA and related entities, and applications of ethical and legal considerations in professional counseling.

**2.SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY** - studies that provide an understanding of the cultural context of relationships, issues and trends in a multicultural and diverse society related to such factors as culture, ethnicity, nationality, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental and physical characteristics, education, family values, religious and spiritual values, socioeconomic status and unique characteristics of individuals, couples, families, ethnic groups, and communities including all of the following:

a. multicultural and pluralistic trends, including characteristics and concerns between and within diverse groups nationally and internationally; b. attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and acculturative experiences, including specific experiential learning activities; c. individual, couple, family, group, and community strategies for working with diverse populations and ethnic groups; d. counselors' roles in social justice, advocacy and conflict resolution, cultural self-awareness, the nature of biases, prejudices, processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination, and other culturally supported behaviors that are detrimental to the growth of the human spirit, mind, or body; e. theories of multicultural counseling, theories of identity development, and multicultural competencies; and f. ethical and legal considerations.

**3.HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT** - studies that provide an understanding of the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels, including all of the following:

a. theories of individual and family development and transitions across the life-span; b. theories of learning and personality development; c. human behavior including an understanding of developmental crises, disability, exceptional behavior, addictive behavior, psychopathology, and situational and environmental factors that affect both normal and abnormal behavior; d. strategies for facilitating optimum development over the life-span; and e. ethical and legal considerations.

**4.CAREER DEVELOPMENT** - studies that provide an understanding of career development and related life factors, including all of the following:

a. career development theories and decision-making models; b. career, avocational, educational, occupational and labor market information resources, visual and print media, computer-based career information systems, and other electronic career information systems; c. career development program planning, organization, implementation, administration, and evaluation; d. interrelationships among and between work, family, and other life roles and factors including the role of diversity and gender in career development; e. career and educational planning, placement, follow-up, and evaluation; f. assessment instruments and techniques that are relevant to career planning and decision making; g. technology-based career development applications and strategies, including computer-assisted career guidance and information systems and appropriate world-wide web sites; h. career counseling processes, techniques, and resources, including those applicable to specific populations; and i. ethical and legal considerations.

**5.HELPING RELATIONSHIPS** - studies that provide an understanding of counseling and consultation processes, including all of the following:

a. counselor and consultant characteristics and behaviors that influence helping processes including age, gender, and ethnic differences, verbal and nonverbal behaviors and personal characteristics, orientations, and skills; b. an understanding of essential interviewing and counseling skills so that the student is able to develop a therapeutic relationship, establish appropriate counseling goals, design intervention strategies, evaluate client outcome, and successfully terminate the counselor-client relationship. Studies will also facilitate student self-awareness so that the counselor-client relationship is therapeutic and the counselor maintains appropriate professional boundaries; c. counseling theories that provide the student with a consistent model(s) to conceptualize client presentation and select appropriate counseling interventions. Student experiences should include an examination of the historical development of counseling theories, an exploration of affective, behavioral, and cognitive theories, and an opportunity to apply the theoretical material to case studies. Students will also be exposed to models of counseling that are consistent with current professional research and practice in the field so that they can begin to develop a personal model of counseling; d. a systems perspective that provides an understanding of family and other systems theories and major models of family and related interventions. Students will be exposed to a rationale for selecting family and other systems theories as appropriate modalities for family assessment and counseling; e. a general framework for understanding and practicing consultation. Student experiences should include an examination of the historical development of consultation, an exploration of the stages of consultation and the major models of consultation, and an opportunity to apply the theoretical material to case presentations. Students will begin to develop a personal model of consultation; f. integration of technological strategies and applications within counseling and consultation processes; and g. ethical and legal considerations.

**6.GROUP WORK** - studies that provide both theoretical and experiential understandings of group purpose, development, dynamics, counseling theories, group counseling methods and skills, and other group approaches, including all of the following:

a. principles of group dynamics, including group process components, developmental stage theories, group members' roles and behaviors, and therapeutic factors of group work; b. group leadership styles and approaches, including characteristics of various types of group leaders and leadership styles; c. theories of group counseling, including commonalities, distinguishing characteristics, and pertinent research and literature; d. group counseling methods, including group counselor orientations and behaviors, appropriate selection criteria and methods, and methods of evaluation of effectiveness; e. approaches used for other types of group work, including task groups, psychoeducational groups, and therapy groups; f. professional preparation standards for group leaders; and g. ethical and legal considerations.

**7.ASSESSMENT** - studies that provide an understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation, including all of the following:

a. historical perspectives concerning the nature and meaning of assessment; b. basic concepts of standardized and non-standardized testing and other assessment techniques including norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment, environmental assessment, performance assessment, individual and group test and inventory methods, behavioral observations, and computer-managed and computer-assisted methods; c. statistical concepts, including scales of measurement, measures of central tendency, indices of variability, shapes and types of distributions, and correlations; d. reliability (i.e., theory of measurement error, models of reliability, and the use of reliability information); e. validity (i.e., evidence of validity, types of validity, and the relationship between reliability and validity); f. age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, disability, culture, spirituality, and other factors related to the assessment and evaluation of individuals, groups, and specific populations; g. strategies for selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment and evaluation instruments and techniques in counseling; h. an understanding of general principles and methods of case conceptualization, assessment, and/or diagnoses of mental and emotional status; and i. ethical and legal considerations.

**8.RESEARCH AND PROGRAM EVALUATION** - studies that provide an understanding of research methods, statistical analysis, needs assessment, and program evaluation, including all of the following:

a. the importance of research and opportunities and difficulties in conducting research in the counseling profession, b. research methods such as qualitative, quantitative, single-case designs, action research, and outcome-based research; c. use of technology and statistical methods in conducting research and program evaluation, assuming basic computer literacy; d. principles, models, and applications of needs assessment, program evaluation, and use of findings to effect program modifications; e. use of research to improve counseling effectiveness; and f. ethical and legal considerations.

**B. PSYCHOPATHOLOGY** - Emotional and mental disorders experienced by persons of all ages; characteristics of disorders; common nosologies of emotional and mental disorders utilized within the U.S. health care system; diagnosis and treatment according to the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, as published by the American Psychiatric Association; preferred treatment approaches for disorders based on research; common medications used by psychiatrists to treat disorders; working with other health care and mental health care professionals in treating individuals with emotional and mental disorders.

**C. ADDITIONAL COURSE WORK:** Examples of appropriate additional course work would be marriage and family counseling, addictive disorders, treating children and adolescents, play therapy, sexual diversity, geriatric counseling, supervision, etc.